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New York Letter

Whether at the beginning of the autumn season or the spring season, the New York collections for the younger set abound in charming cotton fabrics. Simple differences in texture, colour and finish suffice to give this most varied and adaptable of all fabrics an original look and qualities suited to each season and every hour of the day or night.

Fine, sheer, coarse or opaque, these organdies, batistes, piqués and fancy fabrics, these shirtings and gingham which reappear each season, are distinguished by a freshness and crispness which are particularly suited to the making of dresses and outfits for tiny tots, teen-agers and young women. American fashions have achieved a rare mastery in the art of using fabrics and adapting them to feminine wear. The simplest or the most elegant clothes are those made of cotton fabrics. These are found in all price ranges and in every sphere of society, for all seasons and every climate throughout the United States, in the form of lingerie, blouses, day and evening wear, light or quilted housecoats for summer or winter.

In Europe it is sometimes forgotten that New York is not the whole of America, and that America itself is not just a country but an entire continent with very different climates as one goes from Maine to Texas, from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts. It is not surprising therefore that the finest cottons, such as those Switzerland exports to the United States, should always find an outlet in some part or other of this vast territory. Rapid transport from one place to another has also favoured this trend for, travelling by air, one passes so quickly from one climate to another that it must be possible to wear the same dresses in several different climates, to pack and wash them easily. All these qualities are possessed by the cottons imported from Switzerland, thanks to the perfection of their finish, the variety of their weaves and the beauty of their prints in colour and with metallic or raised effects.

One of the outstanding features of this winter's fashions for the younger set is the use of winter cottons. Dresses and suits are made of the most varied cotton fabrics: corduroys, plain or printed with small geometrical designs, so suitable for sports suits and coats; dresses of uncrushable gingham, in dark colours, skirts of grosgrain or cotton worsted in imitation of Scottish woollens, countless shirtwaist or fancy blouses to be worn with full, gathered or pleated skirts.

One very original outfit for wear on the campus is a light coloured cotton blouse worn with a flaring dark cotton skirt, made more voluminous still by a

cotton petticoat with a flounce striped in the shades of the skirt and blouse. A skirt in poodle cloth (in imitation of the fur of the black poodle, which is very popular just now) is worn with a blouse of fine cotton, either plain, figured or embroidered in relief with geometrical designs, or again with Jacquard designs, giving a very original note to the whole outfit.

For dance dresses, full skirts are favourites with teen-agers, in spite of the fashion for narrow skirts which still prevails in all the collections for women. These ball dresses, whether long or short, are worn over full petticoats of fine cotton batiste decorated with embroidery, and flounces in silk or rayon taffeta which give body to the light fabric of the dress. These cottons — tulles, plain organdies in dark colours, embroidered with paillettes or passementerie braid of the raffia type — have won themselves a place in the creation of dresses for evening wear thanks to their practical qualities and their freshness which is so easy to preserve and renew. This winter many evening dresses for young girls will be black, which is by far the most sophisticated colour for blondes. These dresses will either be in embroidered organdie, batiste printed with polka dots or metallic designs, or in silk, taffeta, ottoman, chiffon or satin.

The jumper still remains a favourite with the younger set. It is a sleeveless dress, worn with washable and interchangeable blouses varying in fineness and colour depending on the occasion. One version of the jumper for evening wear is a black silk dress with puffed sleeves of embroidered organdie or silk chiffon.

The fine cottons of Saint-Gall lend themselves admirably to all the variations of these themes which are so essential to girls and young women. They bring to American ready-to-wear models the personal note that differentiates them from mass-production.

Another interesting contribution to fine ready-to-wear creations for young women is that made by Swiss silks. These too have succeeded in adapting themselves to the demands of American taste and are admirably suited to the most different types of dresses, whether shirtwaists for golfing or cocktail and evening dresses. Squares printed in Switzerland continue to be very popular for lovely birthday or Christmas gifts. The quality of the fabrics and the exclusiveness of their designs place them among the high fashion accessories. They blossom like hothouse flowers in gift shops and luxury boutiques all over America.

Thérèse de Chambrier.